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25 JUL 1967

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Review of the Activities of the CIA's Vietnam Station

I. THE OPERATING CLIMATE

1. The impressions I obtained of the CIA Station's activities in Vietnam on this trip are significantly different from the impressions obtained on previous visits. During earlier periods, in looking at the Station one saw a harassed but imaginative band of officers wrestling with a variety of challenges and launching new programs in an effort to throw up some obstacles to slow the Viet Cong momentum and protect us from the fragility of the Saigon Government (the GVN). On this occasion, I saw a Station with a clear and important role in the overall American effort, working as a full and highly regarded member of a Country Team and possessing the initiative in the contest with the Viet Cong. The Station is still over-committed, but is efficiently structured to make a significant contribution for a force of its size.

II. ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

2. Some of the Station's programs in the past were remarkable innovations, unique in the quality of their execution. Yet since they were small, even though well polished, they were precious indications of

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future promise more than major contributions to a current war effort. That day is now over for several reasons, including the greater numbers of our Agency personnel now on the scene, the vast improvement of the Station's organization into regional groups under effective chiefs, and the fact that our officers are approaching programs as participants in a joint effort and as co-workers with their colleagues in other agencies, rather than as parochialists.

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3. Today we have American personnel on duty in Vietnam as members of the Vietnam Station. By contrast, there are around 460,000 US military in Vietnam, of which about 10,000 are intelligence personnel. AID's strength in Vietnam is about 2,000, the Embassy has about 230 people, and USIA about 120. Although in light of our total worldwide responsibilities it will be difficult to increase our career personnel input, our activities in Vietnam must and will be supplemented by the utilization of additional military and contract personnel in order to provide the manpower necessary to execute programs of the scope and variety of those in which the Station is engaged.

III. PRINCIPAL PROGRAM AREAS

4. The Attack on the Communist Apparatus: As the immediate military threat is pushed farther from the populated areas, it becomes ever more important to eliminate the Viet Cong apparatus (also known as

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the political control mechanism or infrastructure) in order to free the people of South Vietnam from the Communists' covert authority. The importance of this task has been underlined by Ambassador Komer and is well recognized by the Station. The Station is hard at work collating our knowledge of the Viet Cong political structure at all levels in order to facilitate the identification and capture of key Communist cadre. The 7,000-odd low-level reports that we pass to our military colleagues each month now not only include order of battle type information on the strength and location of Communist military units but are including a steadily growing amount of intelligence on important Communist officials, i. e., their identities, functions and physical locations. This is a healthy sign. In this endeavor the Station is exploiting a variety of information

and a mass of detailed

information received from around 5,000 Vietnamese who carry out the "Census Grievance" program. At the same time, some of our best officers are utilizing the most professional techniques in pursuing about covert operations aimed at key members of the enemy's highest level command structure in order to open channels of communication to individuals in this key target group so that we can tempt them to defect.

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persuade them to act as we would have them act or, at a minimum, sow doubts among them.

5. Revolutionary Development: The reorganization of the American Revolutionary Development effort has been a major step toward improving the control of US efforts in the "Other War," and will help to ensure that the programs of all US agencies will aim at concentrated objectives. The 24,000-odd Revolutionary Development cadre currently in training under a program operated by our Station constitute the foundation stone of this RD program. While these cadre are by no means perfect, their training, motivation and techniques have stimulated a series of efforts to emulate them and thereby extend their effectiveness or profit from the experience gained in developing the concepts which guide their activities. It is heartening indeed to see some of the results of this activity, to visit, for example, a Delta hamlet of 160 families with an elected council and a self-defense force of 78 young men, located in an area where only six months ago an RD team began its work with 12 families who lived there more or less under Viet Cong authority. It is even more heartening to see how many similar communities have been stimulated and supported and how these communities are succeeding in throwing off enemy domination. The Station has conclusively proved the importance of the cadre program to this "Other War." It has also shown that this program can be carried

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forward from local to area victories as has happened, for example, around

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[] Two years ago [] an urban island in a Viet Cong sea. Now, in its environs, the Viet Cong are being pushed southward and ever farther away.

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6. Political Intelligence and Action: In the political field,

Ambassador Bunker relies heavily on the judgment, initiative and professional techniques of our Station and its officers. The Station is operating under his specific and detailed command and providing him the flexibility he needs in the delicate process of constitutional and electoral development. On the Ambassador's behalf we are developing discreet

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political initiatives, constitutional provisions and electoral platforms.

This same network of relationships and assets will also help provide coverage of GVN political plans and intentions and early warning of political moves which would be counter to US interests.

7. Other Programs: While the manifold programs outlined above are massive by our Agency's standards, they do not comprise the whole of our Station's efforts. In addition to these programs, the Station is also carrying on other activities: []

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a commitment to the Vietnam war by working with Vietnamese youth in the countryside. Through other Station programs, North Vietnam is being subjected to a variety of psychological pressures, including pressures from clandestine radios spreading defeatism and arousing fear of Mao's Red Guards.

IV. MAJOR PROBLEMS

3. The Police-Type Function of Civil Control: I do not mean to suggest that all problems have been solved many still remain. We still have not properly organized [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] control of the hamlets and keeping the Viet Cong away once they have been forced out. A major effort in this field is being built around Ambassador Komer's "Infrastructure Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation" (ICEX) organization which is largely based on a Station proposal prepared at Ambassador Komer's request. ICEX is in its earliest stages and I do not think we have yet recognized the full scope of the staffing requirements that this Agency and the military will have to meet if the ICEX approach is going to work. Much needs to be done to improve the effectiveness [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Much work must also be done on extending the impact of

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Revolutionary Development teams in order to permit the coverage of a
decisive percentage of the total population. Various tentative efforts are
being made along these lines such as [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
hamlet self-defense elements and others; but both a conceptual and
practical job still needs to be done in this vital area.

9. Revolutionary Development Follow-Up: It is also clear that some
mechanism must be developed to ensure a proper follow-up of the special
attention which has been provided by an RD team once the team leaves
the hamlet in which it has been working, otherwise there is a pronounced
tendency to fall back to earlier Vietnamese governmental failings which
often contributed to produce the problem in that hamlet in the first place.
This is primarily a job for Ambassador Komer, but the Station will
certainly work closely with him in attempting to solve it.

10. Needed Organizations and Political Institutions: It is also plain
that additional forms of popular organization, especially in the non-
governmental field (e. g., trade unions and, eventually, political parties),

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must be developed in order to strengthen the fabric of Vietnamese society and render the Vietnamese capable of protecting themselves against Viet Cong probes, political as well as military. This is only one aspect of the fundamental problem of assisting Vietnam in its process of transition from government by mandarin or military authoritarianism to government based on an engagement of the people in a common endeavor. Again, this is an overall American problem: but one to which the Station can contribute substantially through the political expertise of its own officers and through some of our third country assets which, under Station direction, can extend their own Asian influence to help the Vietnamese in this difficult process of political evolution.

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V. CONCLUSIONS

12. In sum, though it appears to me that the war is by no means over and there are certainly fragile elements in the overall picture, it

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is very clear that my Soviet or Chinese counterpart's report must exhibit great concern over the Viet Cong's mounting problems and the steady improvement in the ability of both the South Vietnamese and the Americans to fight a people's war. My counterpart can quite properly ascribe a substantial share of responsibility for both Communist problems and anti-Communist improvement to the activities of our Vietnam Station.

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